

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 271235Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6395

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DACCA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 9929

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, IN, PK, BG

SUBJ: INDIA-PAKISTAN NEGOTIATIONS; GOP REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

BEGIN SUMMARY: ABDUL SATTAR, A MEMBER OF PAKISTAN'S DELEGATION TO THE INDIA-PAKISTAN TALKS, CALLED ON HIS OLD ACQUAINTANCE DCM SCHNEIDER AT THE CHANCERY MONDAY MORNING, AUGUST 27, TO REVIEW THE STATE OF PLAY IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE SAID THAT ON AUGUST 26 THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION HAD SET FORTH A NEW AND COMPREHENSIVE PROPOSAL UNDER WHICH ALL PRISONERS OF WAR WOULD BE RELEASED, ALL BENGALLEES WOULD LEAVE PAKISTAN, PAKISTAN WOULD RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH AND DROP ITS OPPOSITION TO THE AD-MISSION OF BANGLADESH TO THE UN, AND PAKISTAN WOULD ACCEPT 70,000 TO 75,000 BIHARIS AND CONSIDER MORE. THE INITIAL INDIAN REACTIONS WAS UNENTHUSIASTIC. SATTAR STATED TO SCHNEIDER THAT PAKISTAN WAS FEARFUL THAT INDIA WOULD NOT TRANSMIT THIS NEW PROPOSAL TO BANGLADESH AND ASKED IF THE UNITED STATES WOULD TRANSMIT IT AND EVEN PERHAPS COMMEND IT. DCM SCHNEIDER WAS A BIT TAKEN ABACK BY THIS WHOLLY UNPRECEDENTED SUGGESTION. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE UNITED STATES SUPPORTED THE SIMAL NEGOTIATIONS BUT HAD REMAINED STRICTLY APART FROM THEM. HE AGREED, HOWEVER, THAT AS SATTAR WAS SUBMITTING A FORMAL REQUEST OF HIS GOVERNMENT THE EMBASSY WOULD TRANSMIT THIS REQUEST TO WASHINGTON. WE CANNOT CONCEIVE BANGLADESH ACCEPTING THIS NEW PROPOSAL AND OUR STRONG INCLINATION HERE IS THAT WHATEVER THE UNITED STATES DOES IT NOT BE DONE IN DELHI AND

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NOT INVOLVE THE AMERICAN EMBASSY HERE.

ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS ON RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN REQUEST. END SUMMARY.

1. SATTAR BEGAN HIS PRESENTATION BY SAYING THAT THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION WAS DOUBTFUL THAT THE IDEAS IT HAS PUT FORTH TO INDIA CAN BE GOTTEN ACROSS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH IN TIME FOR THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS TO BE CONCLUSIVE. HE THEN DESCRIBED THE STATE OF PLAY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN HAS INDICATED THAT IT IS PREPARED TO AGREE WITH INDIA THAT ALL BENGALEES COULD LEAVE PAKISTAN. THAT IS, THE 203 WOULD NOT BE HELD BACK. IT HAS ALSO AGREED THAT 195 PRISONERS OF WAR COULD REMAIN IN INDIA "FOR THE TIME BEING". THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IS PREPARED TO AGREE THAT "THE 195 POWS WILL REMAIN IN INDIA DURING THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF REPATRIATION OF THE BALANCE OF THE POWS (SATTAR SAID THIS WOULD BE ABOUT FOUR MONTHS). THEREAFTER THERE WOULD BE A TRILATERAL MEETING OF INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND BANGLADESH TO DISCUSS DISPOSITION OF THE 195 POWS".

B. SATTAR EXPLAINED PAKISTAN HAD TWO PROBLEMS WITH THIS PROPOSAL. FIRST, BANGLADESH WOULD RETAIN A VETO ON THE FINAL DECISION REGARDING WHAT WAS DONE ABOUT THE 195 POWS. WHILE PERHAPS THE GOP COULD GET AN AGREEMENT THAT THE 195 WOULD REMAIN IN INDIA UNTIL THEIR FUTURE IS SETTLED, BANGLADESH WOULD BE ABLE SIMPLY NOT RPT NOT TO MAKE A DECISION ON THE POWS AND THE 195 COULD BE "BURIED ALIVE IN INDIA". CONSEQUENTLY THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION HAS SOUGHT INFORMAL ASSURANCE THAT THIS SITUATION WOULD NOT DEVELOP. AZIZ AHMED ASKED PRIME MINISTER GANDHI IF SHE COULD STATE HER OPINION THAT THIS OUTCOME WOULD NOT COME TO PASS AND SAY THAT SHE WOULD USE HER INFLUENCE TO ACHIEVE AN EXPEDITIOUS SETTLEMENT OF THE QUESTION OF WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE 195.

C. THE SECOND PAKISTAN PROBLEM ACCORDING TO SATTAR RELATED TO THE NUMBER OF POWS HELD BACK. SINCE THE GOP WAS PREPARED TO RELEASE ALL BANGALEES IT ASKED THE GOI IF THE NUMBER OF POWS COULD BE CUT BACK DRASTICALLY FROM 195 (SATTAR HAD THE NUMBER OF FIFTY IN MIND). ACCORDING TO SATTAR THE GOI (BUT NOT BANGLADESH) AGREES THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO WAR CRIMES TRIALS. IN VIEW THEREFORE OF THE MUTUAL INDIAN AND PAKISTAN OBJECTIVE TO AVOID TRIALS, THE GOP APPEALED TO MRS. GANDHI TO INTERCEDE
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WITH DACCA TO REDUCE THE NUMBER.

D. IN RESPONSE TO THESE TWO POINTS PRIME MINISTER GANDHI HAS REPLIED THAT THE GOI WOULD NOT RPT NOT ASK MUJIB EITHER TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF POWS HELD BACK OR TO GIVE THE GOP AN ASSURANCE EVEN OF A GENERAL NATURE REGARDING EARLY SETTLEMENT OF WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE 195. THE INDIANS HAVE SAID THAT THIS IS A MATTER FOR BANGLADESH TO DECIDE UPON.

E. SATTAR SAID THAT IN VIEW OF LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE

NEGOTIATIONS PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO DECIDED IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH AGHA SHAHI OVER THE WEEKEND THAT A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH SHOULD BE TRIED. ACCORDINGLY A NEW PACKAGE WAS PRESENTED TO PRIME MINISTER GANDHI BY AZIZ AHMED ON AUGUST 26. THE GOP PROPOSED: THAT ALL PRISONERS OF WAR WOULD BE RELEASED (I.E., NONE WILL BE HELD BACK FOR POSSIBLE TRIALS); ALL BANGALEES WOULD LEAVE PAKISTAN; IN EXCHANGE FOR THE ABOVE PAKISTAN WOULD RECOGNIZE BANGLADESH NOW (SATTAR EXPLAINED BY THIS THAT HE DID NOT MEAN IMMEDIATELY. BHUTTO WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT POLITICAL LEADERS IN PAKISTAN FIRST. BUT RECOGNITION WOULD COME BEFORE ALL POWS HAD LEFT INDIA); THE GOP WOULD DROP ITS OPPOSITION TO THE ADMISSION OF BANGLADESH TO THE UNITED NATIONS; PAKISTAN WOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT SOME 70,000 TO 75,000 BIHARIS WHO WERE HARDSHIP CASES AND WOULD CONSIDER A FURTHER IMPROVEMENT OF THIS FIGURE SO LONG AS THERE WAS NOT A ONE-TO-ONE EXCHANGE OF BANGLAEES AND BIHARIS.

F. IN RESPONSE TO THE PAKISTAN PROPOSAL INDIAN DELEGATION LEADER HAKSAR SAID THAT HE CONSIDERED IT "OLD WINE IN NEW CUPS". AZIZ AHMED DIFFERED SAYING THAT IT WAS RADICALLY NEW. INSTEAD OF WAITING TO SETTLE THE 195 QUESTION LATER AND HAVE RECOGNITION THEN, THE ENTIRE TIMETABLE WOULD BE ADVANCED.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 271235Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6396

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DACCA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 9929/2

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2. SATTAR EXPLAINED THAT THE TWO GOP PROPOSALS REMAINED BEFORE THE GOI. IN REGARD TO THE FIRST, HE CONSIDERED THE BIHARI QUESTION COULD BE WORKED OUT. SWARAN SINGH HAD TOLD AZIZ AHMED THAT THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE OF 20,000 TO 30,000 BETWEEN THE BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN POSITIONS REGARDING BIHARIS. IF THIS

WAS TRUE SATTAR BELIEVED A COMPROMISE POSSIBLE. THEREFORE THE POW QUESTION WAS NOW THE MAJOR POINT AT ISSUE. ASKED IF A TRILATERAL MEETING WOULD REQUIRE PRIOR GOP RECOGNITION, SATTAR REPLIED THAT THE LANGUAGE BEING CONSIDERED STATES THAT SQSH A MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE "ON THE BASIS OF SOVEXPZXGC

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FCA OJOT PRECISELY CLEAR. BUT GOP PROBLEM WITH THE QUESTION ON THE TRILATERAL MEETING WAS THAT THERE WAS NO ASSURANCE REGARDING ITS OUTCOME OR THE TIME WITHIN WHICH A DECISION WOULD BE MADE. SATTAR EXPLAINED THAT THERE WOULD BE GREAT RESENTMENT PARTICULARLY AMONG THE YOUNGER OFFICERS IN THE PAKISTAN ARMY IF THE 195 PRISONERS WERE "BURIED ALIVE IN INDIA".

3. IN REGARD TO THE SECOND PROPOSAL SATTAR SAID SINCE HAKSAR'S FIRST REACTION HAD BEEN TO DISMISS IT, THE GOP IS CONCERNED THAT DACCA MAY NOT GIVE BHUTTO'S NEW PROPOSAL THE CONSIDERATION IT DESERVES. THE GOP HAS GIVEN ALL IT CAN. THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION IS ALSO WORRIED ABOUT LACK OF TRUST BETWEEN DACCA AND NEW DELHI, I.E., THE BENGALESE FEAR THAT THE INDIANS WILL CONFIDENTIAL

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SELL THEM DOWN THE RIVER. CONSEQUENTLY BANGLADESH MAY DISMISS THE NEW BHUTTO PROPOSAL "OUT OF HAND".

4. CONSEQUENTLY PAKISTAN DELEGATION LEADER AZIZ AHMED ASKED THAT THE US PRESENT BHUTTO'S NEW PROPOSAL TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH. SATTAR SAID THE GOP ASKS THAT IF THE US CANNOT COMMEND THE PLAN IT SHOULD SET IT FORTH IN DETAIL. THE DCM REPLIED THAT HE WOULD REPORT THE GOP REQUEST TO WASHINGTON AND SEEK INSTRUCTIONS. HE POINTED OUT THAT AS SATTAR WAS AWARE, THE USG SUPPORTED THESE NEGOTIATIONS BUT HAD SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED BECOMING INVOLVED. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE US AND BANGLADESH WAS UNCERTAIN.

5. SATTAR CONCLUDED IF DACCA'S RESPONSE IS UNFAVORABLE AND THE GOI FIRMLY ADHERES TO ITS PRESENT POSITION, THE GOP WILL HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEPT ALTERNATIVE ONE IN THE FORM TO WHICH INDIA HAD AGREED. SATTAR DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT BHUTTO MIGHT ACCEPT THIS PROPOSAL. ALTERNATELY, THE TALKS MIGHT END AND FURTHER CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO THE ISSUES BEFORE RESUMPTION OF DISCUSSIONS.

6. SATTAR SAID TWO FURTHER NEGOTIATING SESSIONS WERE SCHEDULED FOR TODAY, AUGUST 27, AND THERE WAS A PROJECT FOR ADDITIONAL TALKS AUGUST 28. THE NEGOTIATIONS MAY BREAK UP AFTER AUGUST 28 ALTHOUGH AZIZ AHMED IS NOT PLANNING TO LEAVE FOR THIS TRIP TO PEKING, MOSCOW, ANKARA AND TEHRAN UNTIL AUGUST 30. THERE IS STILL THEREFORE SOME FLEXIBILITY REGARDING DISCUSSIONS

AFTER THE 28TH.

7. COMMENT: WHILE WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO JUDGE THE FACTORS IN PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH WHICH BEAR ON THIS PAKISTANI REQUEST, OUR STRONG INCLINATION IS FOR US IN DELHI STAY OUT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS. WE BELIEVE THE INDIANS WILL CLEARLY SET FORTH THE LATEST PAKISTANI PROPOSAL IN DACCA. THE GOI HAS BEEN SENDING FREQUENT COURIERS TO DACCA TO KEEP THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT INFORMED ON NEGOTIATIONS. AS THE DCM POINTED OUT THE SATTAR, THE GOP ALL-AT-ONCE APPROACH SEEMS TO BE MORE ABRUPT ON THE WAR CRIME TRIALS ISSUE THAT ANYTHING MUJIB COULD ACCEPT. WE QUESTION THEREFORE THAT IT WOULD BE IN OUR INTEREST TO ASSOCIATE OURSELVES WITH IT.

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8. ACTION REQUESTED: WE REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING A RESPONSE TO SATTAR. ALSO URGENTLY REQUEST COMMENTS BY EMBASSIES DACCA AND ISLAMABAD REGARDING GOP REQUEST.

MOYINHAN

NOTE BY OC/T: #####CORRECTION TO FOLLOW, PARA 2.

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